

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. An isolated mammalian staufen protein or *C. elegans* staufen protein exhibiting homology to *Drosophila* staufen and interacting with dsRNA and/or RER.
2. The isolated staufen protein of claim 1 having an amino acid sequence at least 95% identical to a sequence selected from the group consisting of:
 - (a) amino acids from about -81 to about 496 of Figure 1A;
 - (b) amino acids from about 1 to about 496 of Figure 1A;
 - (c) amino acids from about -80 to about 496 of Figure 1A;
 - (d) amino acids from about 2 to about 496 of Figure 1;
 - (e) amino acids from about 1 to about 494 of Figure 1C;
 - (f) amino acids from about 2 to about 494 of Figure 1C;
 - (g) amino acids of *C. elegans* of Figure 1'; and
 - (h) the amino acid sequence of an epitope-bearing portion of any one of the polypeptides of (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) or (g).
3. An amino acid sequence encoding at least one dsRNA binding domain of a mammalian staufen protein or *C. elegans* staufen protein.

4. An isolated nucleic molecule comprising a polynucleotide sequence at least 95% identical to a sequence selected from the group consisting of:

5 (a) a nucleotide sequence encoding a staufen polypeptide comprising amino acids from about -81 to about 496 of Figure 1A;

 (b) a nucleotide sequence encoding a staufen polypeptide comprising amino acids from about 1 to about 496 of Figure 1A;

10 (c) a nucleotide sequence encoding a staufen polypeptide comprising amino acids from about -80 to about 496 of Figure 1A;

 (d) a nucleotide sequence encoding a staufen polypeptide comprising amino acids from about 2 to about 496 of Figure 15 1;

 (e) a nucleotide sequence encoding a staufen polypeptide comprising amino acids from about 1 to about 494 of Figure 1C;

20 (f) a nucleotide sequence encoding a staufen polypeptide comprising amino acids from about 2 to about 494 of Figure 1C;

 (g) a nucleotide sequence encoding a staufen polypeptide comprising amino acids of *C. elegans* of Figure 1'; and

25 (h) a nucleotide sequence encoding a staufen polypeptide comprising a nucleotide sequence complementary to any of the nucleotide sequences in (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) or (g).

5. A recombinant vector comprising said isolated nucleic acid molecule of claim 4.

5 6. A method of making a recombinant host cell comprising introducing the recombinant vector of claim 5 into a host cell.

10 7. A recombinant host cell produced by the method of claim 6.

15 8. A recombinant method for producing staufen polypeptide, comprising culturing said host cell of claim 7 under conditions such that said polypeptide is expressed and recovering said staufen polypeptide.

20 9. A method for treating an animal infected by a RNA virus, comprising administering thereinto a therapeutically effective amount of a staufen polypeptide, fragment or derivative thereof, and/or a nucleic acid molecule encoding same and/or staufen-activity modulator and/or antisense of staufen together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

25 10. The method of claim 9, wherein said RNA virus is a retrovirus.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said retrovirus is HIV.

12. An antibody directed against staufen of mammalian or *C. elegans* origin.

13. A recombinant protein for targeting into a RNA virus,
5 comprising an amino acid sequence portion encoding mammalian staufen or a part or derivative thereof.

14. The recombinant protein of claim 13, wherein said protein is a chimeric protein.

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15. The protein of claim 13 or 14, wherein said RNA virus is HIV.

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16. A composition for targeting into a RNA virus which comprises an effective amount of the recombinant protein of claim 13 or 14.

17. The protein of claim 14, comprising a portion having RNase or protease activity.

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18. The protein according to claim 13 to 18, which prevents proper maturation of said RNA virus.